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Hezekiah's Mistake

A Scholar Who Didn't Like School Discipline.

By GWENDOLIN ADAMS

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A big awkward boy was Hezekiah Griggs, a pupil in the school of Eben for recitation, but Hezekiah, though he had plenty of brains, had not applied them to studying the lesson.

He was growing decidedly uncomfortable. He knew well what an unprepared lesson meant, for in those aggravation of the offense? Since he had managed so long without failing.

ging. He was perspiring at every pore. him. The leicles with which he had meant | The boy tossed down a great heap either pocket and formed a miniature thrash peas, pool in the bottom of each cowhide

the command, "Take off your coat, barely earn his board. sir!" the boy stepped forward and obeyed with a feeling of actual relief.

"Your conduct has been most reprehensible, sir," said the master, push- forty bushels, of which his share, of ing up his coat sleeve and testing the strength of his ruler, while thirty pairs of eyes gazed spellbound and awful silence reigned.

"Most reprehensible, sir." he repeated, and the ruler fell with a thwack every vein in the culprit's body.

Hezekiah never kuew exactly what happened after that. He remembered that an insane desire for vengeance overcame him. He wanted to thrash father's heart and home was ready for the master, to thrash the whole school. him. Before the weapon could descend a second time he sprang at his assailant with elinched tists and blazing

There was a moment of breathless silence while the angry master collared his refractory pupil and shook him as a terrier shakes a rat. Then the flat sided ruler was once more brought into active play upon the back of Hezekiah Griggs.

"Now, sir," said the master when at exertion, he released his hold on Hezekiah's coal collar, "take your seat and learn your history!"

Heedless of the command, the boy seized his jacket and, snatching his cap from its peg on the wall, made a rush for the door. He gained it without opposition, and before the astonished master had time to recover from his surprise he was racing along the highway toward home.

Into the big, roomy kitchen, where Grandfather Griggs himself sat in a great armebair couning the Weekly News, with Grandmother Griggs close by paring apples, he dashed like a

ruqaway engine. "Why. Hezekiah," exclaimed the good old woman, looking somewhat startled, "a body 'd think you'd been fired from a cannon by the way you come flying in: What's happened?" Hezekiah sat down and began to ex-

"You don't mean to say you've run away from school?" said the old man when the boy had reached the most interesting part of his narrative. "Oh, Hezekiah!

The exciamation was full of sorrowful surprise, and Hezekiah's eyes fell. "I'm not going back to school any more," he said doggedly.

He did not dare look up, for he knew the old man had set his heart on his becoming an educated man, and he expected him to be very angry. But grandfather took off his glasses, wiped them and said:

Well, Hezekiah, we won't talk about it tonight. You'd best go to the barn and thrash peas till supper time, and we'll settle this matter about school tomorrow.

Hezekiah obeyed. He went about till dark looking triumphant.

Staying away from school was next thing to beating the master. He slept well and arose firm in his determination not to return to school. When his breakfast and tried to convince him that he was wrong Hezekiah was still

"Well, Hezekiah," the old man said at last, "since your mind's made up managed to say, "I'm a mean sneak, there's no use of urging you further. I'd have been giad enough if you had I believe I'll go back to school." gone, and if you'd have stuck to it I wouldn't have minded a year or two at college to finish off with. As it is, you'll have to earn your living some other-way, and I supose the sooner you set about it the better."

"I'm willing to work, grandfather." Hezekiah said, in some surprise.

"Yes, I know, and I shouldn't won- to college. der if Silas Jones would give you a job for a month or two. He was saying be'd like to get a boy to do chores, and, although you ain't much used to work, if you get round spry you might

"Grandfather"-

"Or," continued the old man, "If you'd just as soon thrash peas I'll hire you myself. I'll give you every tenth bushel, and you can pay me \$1.50 a week for board. What do you say to

"Just as you like, grandfather,"
"Very well. Then we'll call it a bargain, and when you're through with that maybe something else will turn up, and if you should be out of a job. why, your little room will be ready for you, and I won't charge a cent more than \$1.50 a week, seeing it's you.

Hezekiah." Hezekinh was disagreeably surprised at the turn affairs had taken. It had never occurred to him that his grandfather, who had cared for him ever since he was left a helpless little or-Watson. The history class was up phan ten years before, would cast him off simply because he had tried to thrash the master and wouldn't go to school.

But he started for the barn, trying very hard to look as if things were turning out exactly as he had expected they would. He even managed to days no weak leniency was shown to whistle faintly as he passed the windelinquents. To be sure, this was the dow, through which he felt his grandfirst recitation Hezekiah had missed father was regarding him, but the last during the term, but was not that an melancholy note died away long before he reached the barn.

Hezekiah never knew before that his grandfather had harvested so many peas. There they were, brown and Hezekiah was aware that as soon as crisp and inviting, piled in rough, unthe class was dismissed be would re- even masses to the top of either mow ceive a not altogether unmerited flog- and stowed away on the beams above

to refresh the thirsty occupants of into the middle of the thrashing floor the back seats melted in the intense picked up his flail and began opera heat, and a tiny stream of ice water tions. But it was of no use to try to trickled slowly from the extremity of make himself believe that he liked to

He tried to buoy himself up with the thought that he was earning money, The young offender was growing but long before night even this thought desperate, and when the master, have failed him as he began to realize that ing dismissed the other members of unless he got along considerably faster the history class, turned to him with than he was then doing he would

He kept steadily at his task for a week and then cleaned up and measured what he had thrashed-exactly course, was four bushels. Peas were worth 60 cents a bushel; accordingly he earned \$2.40. After paying his board he would have 90 cents left-

an average of 15 cents a day. It was discouraging. Grandfather which sent the blood tingling through Griggs said not a word, but the boy knew well that if he would only acknowledge himself in the wrong and promise to go back to school and obey the master the old place in his grand-

> But pride would not permit him to rield, and all through the short December days and the first mouth of the new year the regular clip-clap of the fail was heard without intermission and the beap of peas in the granary grew and grew till it amounted to 250 bushels.

Hezekiah had almost completed his task and was rejoicing to think that be and the flail, which, in spite of their long standing fellowship, he corlength, becoming weary of such severe dially hated, were about to part company.

> A boy is like a colt. Nothing is so well calculated to drive the nonsense out of his head and make him trustworthy as a little regular work. Hezekinh did not know this, but he was quite conscious that he did not feel as he had felt six weeks before.

> He had been doing some hard thinking while swinging the flail and had begun to see that he was not altogether the fine fellow he had always imagined himself to be.

He had worked harder at this job of thrashing peas than he had ever done at anything before and yet his earnings were barely sufficient to board and clothe him while thus engaged. He thought the matter over and came to the conclusion that he owed his grandfather something for all those years of helpless childhood, wherein the old man's love and care had been watchful and unremitting.

Hezekiah had a conscience. It was very like other boy's consciences, full of contradictions and absurdities; but, for all that, it pointed out that the least he could render to his grandfather for all his kindness was a willing obedience.

He made up his mind he would do it. and as he wielded the fail above the last "dooring" he was bravely resolving to tell his grandfather all that was in his heart. So deeply engrossed was he in pondering over this good resolution that he did not observe a dark shadow which fell between him and the soulight that streamed through the open door till a voice said:

"Well. Hezekiah, you're just about done, I see. The boy looked up and saw the benevolent face of his good grand-

father smiling down upon him. "You've done very well-very well," continued the old man approvingly. "I'd no idea that you would keep at it till they were finished. I believe grandfather called him aside after there's the making of a man in you after all. Hezekiah. What were you thinking of going at next?"

The blood rushed to the boy's forehead, and his heart beat wildly, but he grandfather, but if you'd just as soon

"All right," returned the old man calmiy, "I'd just as lief."

And so, after all, things turned out very much as Grandfather Griggs had intended they should. Hezekiah went back to school, took his whipping for running away, finished his course in the history class and in due time went

He became a prosperous city physicinn and still lives to tell his grandhildren of the fun they used to have in the little log schoolbouse years ago, and they often laugh over the mis-take he made the time he undertook to thrash the master.

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